



HOW-TO GUIDE: IMPLEMENTING THE TZD STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN



Toward Zero Deaths[®]
National Strategy on Highway Safety

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Introduction

The Strategic Communication Plan for the National Strategy on Highway Safety provides a detailed framework for implementing the national Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) strategy at the national, state, and local level. The plan* identifies target audiences (potential partners) and key messages (global talking points) that can be used to educate these potential partners about the impact of traffic crashes and the critical importance of a zero-fatalities goal, along with strategies and tactics for engaging them in TZD implementation.



TZD implementation is not a solitary task: It takes an army of traffic safety professionals from across the four Es...along with individuals from many other disciplines in both the public and private sector to get the job done.

The purpose of this guide is to identify those elements of the TZD Strategic Communication Plan vital for promoting adoption and sustainability of the TZD approach at the state and local level. Sprinkled throughout are examples of how agencies are putting these plan elements into practice to engage partners. This guide also offers direction for identifying and targeting potential partners and for effectively tailoring communication messages that will motivate partners to implement the TZD strategies. It concludes by discussing how to use ambassadors—individuals who are well trained and armed

with an engaging story—to effectively carry the TZD message out into the community to garner support, spark enthusiasm, and bolster the ranks among potential partners and the public.

The TZD Strategic Communication Plan elements and implementation examples included in this guide were identified through in-person or telephone interviews, focus groups (conducted via conference call) with state and local stakeholders, online research, and a review of previously published reports and documents. A key theme that emerged from the focus groups is the need for more and better communication between those tasked with leading a state's TZD effort and its external stakeholders and partners. TZD implementation is not a solitary task: It takes an army of traffic safety professionals from across the four Es—engineering, education, enforcement, and emergency services—along with individuals from many other disciplines in both the public and private sector to get the job done. Communication is vital to the effort and this guide seeks to reinforce that!

Bringing a TZD Vision to Life

In 1997, the American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials (AASHTO) published a Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) and encouraged all states to follow its lead. This data-driven, evidence-based plan—which identifies and addresses emphasis areas through the coordinated work of the four Es of traffic safety—was subsequently mandated in 2005 with passage of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU).

WHY A TZD BRAND?

The TZD Strategic Communication Plan recognizes that the “TZD program is an umbrella campaign for other state, national and organizational traffic safety campaigns” and that states may have their own zero vision programs and brands. The plan calls on those states to use the “TZD Proud Partner logo in conjunction with a state’s current zero-based program branding.” The goal, over-time, is for “all traffic safety messages” to be tagged with the TZD branding, “while still allowing for specific state branding.”



*Throughout this how-to guide, the terms “TZD Plan,” “TZD Strategic Communications Plan,” and “the plan” refer to the Strategic Communication Plan for the National Strategy on Highway Safety.



Today, every state has an SHSP, and many of these plans serve as “vehicle[s] for implementing a zero-fatalities philosophy” (NCHRP, 2016). (To date, 40 states have adopted a zero-fatalities goal.) SHSPs are built on four fundamental elements: leadership, collaboration, communication, and data collection and analysis. Not surprisingly, these fundamental elements are addressed in the TZD Strategic Communication Plan, which is designed to help states foster implementation and gauge progress. But it’s important to point out that while SHSPs can bring leadership, champions, partners, stakeholders, action plans, and resources to the table, success is not guaranteed. Success is only possible when people rally around and take ownership of the SHSP; work collaboratively to execute it by sharing information, resources, and best practices; communicate regularly and in a manner that invites others to join in; and measure and report progress consistently and publicly, recognizing that course corrections will be needed along the way.

It’s not uncommon, however, for those tasked with SHSP development and adoption to assume that the work is getting done. After all, there’s a plan, which many stakeholders contributed to, and their respective organizations are tasked with taking the ball and running with it. But it’s not that simple; there must be infrastructure in place—a *vocal* champion, a dedicated operations staff, and thousands of foot soldiers who have adequate resources—to do the work and produce the desired results. People—whether stakeholders, partners, or the public—are at the heart of that effort. That’s the underlying theme of the TZD Strategic Communication Plan.

MAKING ROADWAY DEATHS PERSONAL

How many people are killed on America’s roads each year? That’s the question people in Providence, Rhode Island, were asked in a [three-minute video](#) produced by its department of transportation to generate awareness about the state’s TZD mission. Answers ranged from thousands to just a handful. When these same people were asked to weigh in on how many deaths would be acceptable for their *own* families, the answer was always “zero.” The Ocean State is just one of many that have posed these questions and packaged them into a video for use by partners to engage the public in a discussion about why zero is the only acceptable roadway safety goal.

Critical TZD Plan Elements

The TZD Strategic Communication Plan identifies quantifiable objectives for gauging impact. Among these objectives is increasing the number of partners actively engaged in implementing an agency’s TZD program, which as noted previously is often the SHSP. For purposes of this guide, potential partners (state and local) represent both the public and private sector and include government agencies; nonprofits; public health; first responders and law enforcement; elected officials; small and large businesses; educational institutions; community, civic, and faith-based organizations; and the media.

Critical TZD Plan Elements



TZD champion



Dedicated staff



What’s Your Goal? video



Talking points



Training for partners



Proven countermeasures & messaging



Web-based clearinghouse



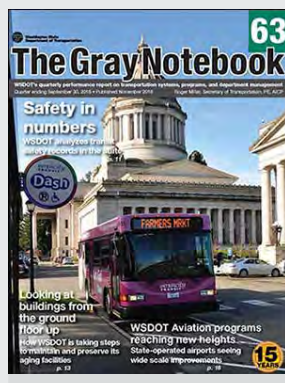
While the argument can be made that all information in the plan is critical, certain elements have proven more successful for engaging and motivating potential partners to help with TZD implementation over the long term. These include:

- ☑ **Designating a highly visible, respected, and passionate TZD champion.** This individual will provide stable leadership and can be tapped to invite partners to join the effort through personal contact—on-site meetings, TZD-hosted events with target audience leaders, or presentations at the statewide meeting. The champion will also keep partners apprised of progress and celebrate successes ([TZD Plan](#), p. 14).
- ☑ **Dedicating staff.** Ideally, this will be one or two full-time employees who are clearly identified as TZD coordinators or managers handling all facets of the TZD program. (Some states have set aside funding for consultant support or management of this function.) Responsibilities may include identifying potential partners for contact by the TZD champion and regularly following up with partners (ideally monthly, but at a minimum quarterly) to determine needs, share new information in support of the zero goal, provide training, and monitor activities and progress ([TZD Plan](#), pp. 15 & 17).
- ☑ **Creating a state version of the “What’s Your Goal?” video**, along with a corresponding facilitator’s guide and handout, to introduce and personalize the zero-fatalities goal for

A STRONG SUPPORT SYSTEM, ACCESS TO DATA

A clearly defined structure or network that provides ongoing support for TZD implementation is not common practice among TZD states—with some exceptions. Washington State’s [Target Zero](#) initiative was launched in 2000 and is led (in a de facto capacity) by the Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC). Partners turn to WTSC for data and other TZD information. In addition, Target Zero coordinators across the state, as well as councils and conferences, foster regular information sharing.

The Washington State Department of Transportation also publishes [The Gray Notebook](#), the state’s quarterly transportation performance report that includes progress made in achieving a zero-fatalities goal. The *Notebook* is disseminated not only to the governor and TZD partners, but also to the public. A four-page “lite” version of *The Gray Notebook*, allowing for a quicker



read, is available as a [pdf](#) and in a [smartphone and tablet-friendly format](#).

Minnesota’s statewide TZD initiative, on the other hand, is supported through a partnership between the state Departments of Transportation (MnDOT), Health (MDH), and Public Safety (DPS). The agencies contract with the University of Minnesota’s Center for Transportation Studies (CTS) to provide administrative support, which includes building and maintaining the [zero-fatalities website](#), organizing and leading the annual state safety conference, and convening stakeholder meetings. One example of these activities is a quarterly TZD breakfast, organized by CTS, which brings together private- and public-sector representatives to learn about a traffic safety topic and share updates. The events are webcast to involve those who are unable to travel. MnDOT also funds full-time regional TZD coordinators who engage with local stakeholders and provide data and technical assistance to communities for use in creating and refining their own local safety plans that incorporate the zero-based philosophy.



potential partners. The video should be available in a variety of formats for use by partners in reaching constituents, employees, and stakeholders ([TZD Plan](#), p. 15). The facilitator’s guide should include talking points with questions to prompt dialogue after showing the video. The handout, for viewers to take home and share with family members, friends, and neighbors, should describe proven countermeasures such as buckling up, stowing cell phones, and designating a driver ([TZD Plan](#), p. 13).

- ☑ **Developing global and state or local talking points** tailored specifically to the partners and their constituents, stakeholders, and employees ([TZD Plan](#), pp. 12–13) for use in initiating and sustaining the conversation. Using national data such as “35,092 people died in traffic crashes in the U.S. in 2015; that’s 96 fatalities a day” ([NCSA, 2016](#)) or “Traffic crashes...cost an estimated \$412.1 billion in lost wages and productivity, medical and administrative expenses, employer costs, and property damage in 2015,” ([NSC, 2016](#)) helps to illustrate the magnitude of the problem. However, talking points that use current state or local data coupled with causation factors should also be developed (e.g., “One-third of New Jersey’s 562 motor vehicle fatalities in 2015 involved an impaired driver; one in five fatalities involved an unbelted occupant” [[NJ Div. of Highway Traffic Safety, 2016](#)]). Once developed, talking points should be updated regularly.
- ☑ **Developing and providing training to new partners.** Training for new partners should promote the use of a shared zero-fatalities vernacular and include branding and resources; tactics, tools, and tips for engaging an audience in a discussion about a zero goal and the role each plays in achieving it; and suggestions for incorporating zero fatalities into existing health and wellness or safety programs and policies ([TZD Plan](#), pp. 13 & 10). Making this training available through safety-related as well as non-safety-related conferences or meetings (e.g., Society of Human Resource Managers, Occupational Health and Safety Administration, State Driver Education Association, Business & Industry Association) is essential for increasing involvement of non-traditional partners.
- ☑ **Identifying high-risk demographic groups, proven countermeasures, and appropriate messaging** through ongoing state and local crash data analysis and behavioral safety polls or surveys. Partners can use this information to reach these groups through their respective

LEVERAGING COMMUNITY & CORPORATE SUPPORT

In New Jersey, the TZD brand is prominently displayed on *Street Smart NJ* pedestrian safety materials currently being used by 40 communities across the state. This grassroots education and enforcement campaign, developed by TZD stakeholders, partners with business groups, retailers, sports teams, and many other organizations to disseminate information. The MAYO Performing Arts Center in Morristown, for example, inserted tip cards featuring the TZD logo into its playbills and displayed the message on its marquee located adjacent to one of the town’s busiest roadways. Another example is Minnesota-based North Memorial Health Care, which placed TZD logos on its fleet of ambulances

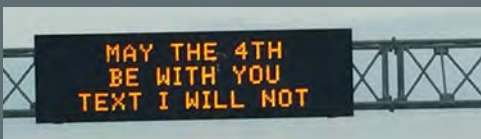
and helicopters. These vehicles respond to more than 70,000 calls for assistance annually.



outreach and communication channels ([TZD Plan](#), p. 14). The information should also be conveyed to partners through TZD managers, TZD training, and a TZD website.

- ☑ **Creating a web-based TZD materials clearinghouse.** The website should clearly identify a point of contact and allow partners to easily download (or request) educational, outreach, and promotional materials that can be customized (e.g., inclusion of target audience’s logo and contact information) but are tagged with the state’s zero-goal brand or the TZD branding or Proud Partner logo ([TZD Plan](#), p. 16; see ["Why a TZD Brand"](#) sidebar). The website should also house other partner resources, including talking points; the most current crash, injury, and fatality data (including causation); progress reports or indicators; a comprehensive list of TZD stakeholders and partners with hyperlinks; the TZD video, facilitator guide, or handout (discussed previously); and TZD best practices and idea starters with contact information (name, organization, e-mail, telephone).

NOT YOUR TYPICAL GOVERNMENT SAFETY MESSAGE



“[Message Monday](#),” the Iowa Department of Transportation’s use of its network of state highway dynamic message boards to convey safety messages and the current fatality count to motorists, is not your typical government safety message. That’s because what is posted is a mix of pop culture references, holiday messages, and thought-provoking statements designed to get the public’s attention and spark conversation. A Zero Fatalities blog, Facebook page, and Twitter feed are used to convey each message’s backstory and keep the discussion going. The public is invited to suggest messages, which are reviewed by a DOT committee.

Identifying Potential Partners

Many hands make light work. That certainly applies to implementation of a statewide TZD program. Partners are critical for helping to effectively communicate that zero fatalities is the only acceptable traffic safety goal and that it can only be achieved when every roadway user makes safety a top priority. Partners can also add credibility to a TZD program, since they are not as directly invested in the outcome as a state department of transportation, highway safety office, local government agency, or non-governmental safety organization. These credible partners can speak as community members, supporters, and friends to audiences who—as employees, customers, or members—are naturally receptive to their messages. Partnerships alone may not prevent every traffic crash, but they can help expand message reach and resources while building a community of allies committed to saving lives.

Government agencies and nonprofits often lack communication budgets as generous as those in the for-profit world. Corporate partners can help. By directing some of their advertising or communications budget to the TZD program, they can enhance their reputation in the community while achieving their marketing aims. Helping doesn’t necessarily require boosting the budget. A planned ad, promotion, or mailing can include the TZD message—for instance, an electronic billboard promoting a

hospital might remind passing motorists to buckle up every trip.

Major employers or service providers are routinely in contact with thousands of people in local communities. With little effort, they can leverage existing communications networks to deliver the TZD message. Traffic safety messages benefit partners because they promote the well-being of employees and customers while reflecting positively on the messenger. The CEO of a large company might deliver an electronic safety message to every employee’s desktop or smartphone. A utility company might include a TZD message on monthly billing statements. A membership organization



can include a traffic safety message in its newsletter, on its website, or with event information. In each case, the TZD message is not just delivered—it is implicitly supported and shared by established leaders in the community.

An opportunity for give-and-take that leads to greater understanding is more likely to occur when local partners—rather than large, remote entities—are involved.

Messages delivered by a government agency can have an impact, but they don't look or feel the same as information coming from a grassroots source. When the message is personalized, it's harder for recipients to remove themselves from the effects of the problem and the response to it. For example, if a driver's doctor, a major retailer, or a respected community organization takes up the cause of zero fatalities, the issue gains urgency and relevance. An opportunity for give-and-take that leads to greater understanding

is more likely to occur when local partners—rather than large, remote entities—are involved. And the greater the number of injuries and lives lost in a community, the more the issue can be brought closer to home—making it even more relevant and compelling.

Companies and nonprofit organizations often employ people with specialized skills—communications and marketing strategists, technology experts, social media specialists, graphic designers, local community relations liaisons—who can help the cause. When considering potential partners, think in terms of the tasks that need to be accomplished and what skill sets might be brought to the table by enlisting a particular partner.

It's also important to consider the many touch points in a person's life. For example, the average adult driver has a job, a family, a social network, a mechanic. She or he is also likely to use a doctor, a lawyer, an insurance agent, a utility provider, and a bank. Thinking about this driver from the standpoint of a particular traffic safety problem such as impaired driving, may also reveal the driver's favorite bar or restaurant, a favorite brand of beverage, and favorite athletic team or music event. Each of these aspects of the driver's daily routine should be considered when identifying potential partners.

Conducting a facilitated brainstorming session with stakeholders to identify potential partners is one way to build a list of potential partners. A successful brainstorming session is one for which quantity, rather than quality, is the goal and wild thinking is encouraged. Once all potential partners' comments are captured on paper, they should be organized and classified, with the best prospects retained for further investigation.

Tailoring Messages to Target Potential Partners

Enlisting potential partners to help implement the TZD program is hard work. Potential partners must be educated about the program using information relevant to them and their constituents, and the infrastructure and resources must be in place to support the partners once they are on board. Before conveying information

ENGAGING OLDER DRIVERS IN VISION ZERO

New York City's Vision Zero initiative focuses on those who are most likely to fall victim to traffic crashes caused by dangerous driving. That includes members of the rapidly growing senior population. In 2016, the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department for the Aging implemented "Streetwise," an educational program featuring older adults discussing how to prevent dangerous driving within their neighborhoods. The program is delivered during NYC DOT's senior center visits and by specially trained New York Police Department officers. (For more information about this effort see the [Vision Zero Year Three Report](#).)



about the zero-fatalities program, however, do your homework on a potential partner. That involves asking and answering key questions such as:

- Who is the primary contact person for this potential partner?
- Who (within the TZD community) has a personal or professional relationship with this person?
- What position does this person hold in the organization?
- How much does this person know about the extent of the traffic crash problem?
- What is known about this person’s education, beliefs, culture, and attitudes when it comes to traffic safety?
- Is a neutral, positive, or negative response likely?
- Who might see or hear this information in addition to the primary contact person? And how do they differ from the primary contact?
- Will more background information be needed?
- How will the message need to be reshaped to make it understandable and acceptable if forwarded to others?

This step is important! It will help determine what language is appropriate, whether it’s okay to use safety or technical terms, how much background is needed, and so on. Profiling each potential partner helps determine whether the tone should be formal or informal and whether the receiver is likely to respond positively or negatively to the message or remain neutral. It’s also important to consider whether there’s a secondary audience: If the primary contact person must vet the request with a boss, will the message in its current form be appropriate for that individual?

EDUCATING POTENTIAL PARTNERS ABOUT RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Educating elected officials—particularly state legislators—about how an investment in traffic safety yields a significant return on investment is critical for enlisting their support and bolstering resources.

Building on 2003 legislation that required 20 percent of a \$3 billion bond issue to be dedicated to traffic safety improvement projects, the Texas Transportation Commission published [Solutions for Saving Lives on Texas Roads \(pdf\)](#) in August 2016. The white paper clearly and succinctly illustrates how investing in traffic safety has the potential to prevent crashes and save lives. For example, the paper features a simple yet compelling chart showing the number of lives that could be saved based on the 5- to 20-year service life of key engineering improvements (e.g., rumble strips, intersection improvements) and the estimated impact of 5 years of driver education and enforcement

campaigns (e.g., seat belt use, novice driver training). The total investment for each is listed, along with the potential cumulative benefit in billions of dollars and the estimated return on each \$1 spent.

The Michigan Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) offers a half-day workshop to help elected officials learn what they need to know about traffic safety—and what their constituents expect them to know. The intent is to give elected officials not only a better appreciation of commonly misunderstood traffic safety concepts, but also to encourage them to consult with safety professionals to make informed decisions about safety programs. Technical staff are also welcome at these workshops and can learn techniques for communicating with elected officials such as avoiding jargon, using facts to back up recommendations, and holding briefings on serious crash or emergent situations.



In addition to profiling the key contact(s), gather intelligence about potential partners. Check out their websites, ads, and printed materials to uncover clues about partners’ culture, outreach and marketing strategies, and other goals. Ask around. Talk to employees and community members, and use what is learned to connect the dots between the partner’s aims and that of the TZD program.

Understanding the potential partner also involves identifying and conveying benefits. Considering what a potential partner will gain (e.g., "What’s in it for me?," or WIIFM) by helping to implement the TZD program is vital for securing buy-in. That means explaining not only the extent of the problem—*Traffic crashes claimed 500 lives in our state last year*—but how addressing it could benefit the partner—*Promoting a zero-fatalities goal could help reduce the medical and loss-of-work costs that impact your business when an employee or one of their family members is involved in a crash*. [Table 1](#) provides examples of what to consider when developing WIIFM messages for potential TZD program partners.

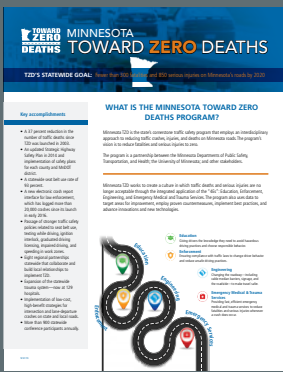
Table 1: Benefits for specific partner groups

Potential Partner	“What’s In It for Me?”
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce costs (lost productivity, health care, liability) • Bolster employee goodwill • Improve employees’ (and their families’) health and safety • Demonstrate corporate social responsibility
Law Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve community relations (educate rather than ticket) • Reduce costs (lost productivity, health care, liability) related to officer crashes
Educational Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate students about social responsibility • Reduce costs (lost productivity, health care, liability)
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve patient and community safety and health • Bolster patient relations • Reduce health care costs
Faith-Based Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve parishioners’ safety and well-being • Spotlight the leading cause of death for children and young adults • Expand reach in the community
Elected Officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spotlight the leading cause of death for children and young adults • Bolster constituent relations • Highlight the return on investment generated by safety investments, which can reduce taxes
Government Officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce costs (lost productivity, health care, liability, emergency response) • Improve resident, employee, and visitor safety and well-being (safe communities bolster the economy)
Media, Community, or Civic Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spotlight the leading cause of death for children and young adults • Bolster audience goodwill • Demonstrate social responsibility



A COMPELLING LEAVE-BEHIND

Leaving a potential partner with information that explains what the TZD program does, along with program goals and accomplishments, is important for reinforcing messages. Minnesota has developed a [one-pager \(pdf\)](#) that does just that as well as explains how individuals and groups can get involved. It, along with three other documents — *TZD Strategic Direction* (a handout explaining the program’s mission, vision, and values), *TZD Program Highlights* (a longer version of the one-pager) and *Minnesota TZD: 10 Years of Progress* (a 12-page report discussing the program’s many successes in the decade since it began) are housed on the [Minnesota TZD website](#) for easy access by stakeholders working to expand the partner network.



Meeting with Potential Partners

Personal outreach to a potential partner—particularly a face-to-face meeting—is recommended. It’s always a good idea to go in with a list of basic benefits that illustrates how working together could help a partner achieve broad goals while positioning the entity in a positive light. But resist the urge to immediately launch into a sales pitch. Instead, taking into account what was learned through profiling and intelligence gathering, briefly introduce the TZD program, why it’s important, and what the potential partner will gain by being involved. Then stop talking and listen carefully to what the contact has to say about what was presented, making note of both personal and organizational motivations, shared goals and objectives, and common vision.

Consider how involvement in the TZD program could help position the individual for positive recognition by superiors. Help the person envision the lifesaving role her or his organization may be able to play in the community by advancing the zero-fatalities goal. Sharing personal reasons for wanting to help may prompt the potential partner’s key contact to share motivations for wanting to get involved as well. That, in turn, may lead to a discussion about specific ways the partner can help with TZD implementation.

Before ending the meeting, leave the key contact with a brief document that clearly and succinctly outlines the TZD goals and



uses compelling data that illustrates the benefits to the contact or organization (remember WIIFM!). Share the names and motivations of other partners, as appropriate, so they feel part of—or a leader of—an important, broad-based initiative. Include a list of resources and tools available to make it easy for the potential partner to convey TZD messages and obtain assistance and information.

Once a Partner is On Board

While gaining new partners can be time-intensive, keeping partners engaged once they’re on board requires regular, ongoing communication coupled with tools and resources. As noted earlier in this guide (see [Critical TZD Plan Elements](#)), dedicating staff who regularly follow up with partners to determine needs, share new data or materials, and monitor activities and progress is vital. In addition, establishing a website that houses a toolkit will make it easier for partners to access and convey the TZD message.

A toolkit should contain TZD-branded materials, fact sheets, and talking points that can be





incorporated into short articles as well as other resources (e.g., article reprints, print or web-ready stories) that might be used for longer-form communications (e.g., employee newsletters, corporate publications or brochures). Also consider providing “speech inserts”—a paragraph or two about TZD that a partner could include when delivering remarks at a public forum. Keep the toolkit fresh by including tweets, Facebook posts, graphics, and photos suitable for use in social media. Sample materials that partners can easily customize with their logo and contact information are always

welcome. Partners, however, should also be encouraged to get creative and share new resources they’ve developed for posting (with credit to the source) on the TZD website.

Provide opportunities for partners to meet regularly and share information, the latest data, and best practices. Regional or statewide TZD summits or forums can re-energize long-time partners as well as jump-start those just joining the initiative. At these gatherings, announce gains made as well as shortcomings and brainstorm how to address the latter; introduce new countermeasures, practices, policies, and materials; and offer training designed to help partners tell the TZD story and expand their reach. Use these gatherings to also recognize partner contributions by giving awards. Remember, partners are valuable allies in conveying the TZD message, so treat them well by being generous with praise and recognition. Giving credit to partners wherever appropriate helps to reinforce a sense of community and emphasize that they are part of a larger effort with significance and impact.

Besides evaluating the success of the TZD initiative in reducing crashes and saving lives, take stock of the effectiveness of partnerships. Ask partners for help in evaluating and improving the results of the partnership: What is and isn’t working? What do they want to know? How do they define success? Also ask partners to share what they’re doing in support of the TZD program (check in at least twice a year, but ideally quarterly) and monitor traditional and social media for stories and posts that create visibility for partners. If possible, document the value of the exposure to partners in terms they’ll understand, such as the number of people who have been exposed to the message or the results of data you may have collected on impacts. At a minimum, provide an annual report detailing what has been accomplished and how partners have contributed to that effort.

From Partner to Ambassador

Partners provide a means to expand the reach and impact of the TZD program through their respective communication channels. But ambassadors—individuals who are trained to deliver specific TZD messages using their own words and experiences—take that

A ONE-STOP CLEARINGHOUSE

With the support of marketing services agency Penna Powers, the states of Iowa, Utah, and Nevada have built websites that serve as [one-stop TZD clearinghouses](#) for both partners and the public.

The TZD brand, along with action-oriented prevention strategies, is front and center on the homepage. The current (or most recent) roadway fatality count and statistics are used to convey the extent of the crash problem—e.g., 165 lives lost from speeding/aggressive driving, 9 to drowsy driving—along with real-life stories delivered through words, pictures, and videos. Each state’s plan for getting to zero is available on the website, along with resources (e.g., videos, radio, television, and social media ads), detailed statistics, and other tools that partners can use to convey the TZD message with their stakeholders and the public can share with family and friends.



MAKE A CONNECTION WITH A REAL-LIFE STORY

Growing up, Noah Reyman didn't wear a seat belt very often, and that has had a lasting effect. "It's just not something I always think about doing," he admits. But one day while riding as a passenger in his girlfriend's vehicle, he buckled up. "I don't know why...It was just one of those days I reminded myself to do it." Good thing he did. When their vehicle came upon a group of motorcyclists, one of the riders swerved into their lane and hit them head on. The motorcyclist was pronounced dead at the scene, while Noah, his girlfriend, and his five-year-old son, who was safely strapped in his car seat in the back, suffered only minor cuts and bruises.

Noah's real life experience illustrates the power of using a story to convey the zero-fatalities message. Even though Noah is a first responder and has seen the devastation a crash can cause, it took a head-on collision of his own before he made the connection that seat belts save lives. For more real life stories, visit the [Iowa Zero Fatalities website](#).

outreach to a whole new level. Consider them as storytellers who can help bring the TZD goal and strategies to life through presentations to businesses, community groups, and school groups as well as through one-on-one conversations with elected officials, coworkers, family members, and friends.

Bear in mind, however, that TZD ambassadors are made, not born. States seeking to develop a cadre of ambassadors should start by building a training program that not only provides candidates with critical data about the crash problem and the proven strategies to address it, but also with public speaking guidance, time management tips and tactics, and information on the importance of being a positive role model ("Practice what you preach!"). Most important, trainees need help developing their own story that they can comfortably, confidently, and enthusiastically share with others. Enlist the help of a professional skilled at training others to find ambassadors' inner storyteller if possible. Storytelling is a powerful teaching and training tool; in fact, research confirms that people remember stories much better than explanations or presentations.

To build a cadre of ambassadors, start by offering training to people already working in traffic safety—engineers, law enforcement officials, emergency service providers, educators, and advocates. These individuals are likely to have the necessary commitment, passion, and subject matter knowledge but may need help identifying the learning objectives they need to teach (e.g., the effectiveness of seat belts and child safety seats, the increased crash risk associated with texting) using a common, shared vernacular. They may also need

help determining how to use their unique experiences (stories) to connect emotionally with their audiences. That emotional connection is what advertisers use to sell their products and politicians rely on to engage voters, so why not leverage it to promote the adoption of proven safety behaviors (e.g., always buckling up, using crosswalks, wearing a bike helmet) that will contribute to achievement of the zero-fatalities goal?

Don't limit ambassador training to only those working in traffic safety. Look for opportunities to partner with academic, business, professional, community, human/social service, health care, and civic groups to offer training in conjunction with their annual conferences, summits, or monthly meetings. These pre-formed groups provide another means to build an army of ambassadors who can deliver the TZD message to their peers (including delivery in a language



CREATING AN ARMY OF AMBASSADORS

Zero fatalities isn't a pipe dream to safety stakeholders in Nevada. Since 2013, the state has been conducting two-day Zero Fatalities Ambassador workshops to train school, law enforcement, community, and business leaders to convey key messages (e.g., don't drive impaired, always buckle up, focus on the road, be a safe pedestrian). Coordinated by the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) and the Office of Traffic Safety, participants share strategies, hear from victim advocates, and receive media training. They also learn about resources they can use to help spread the zero-fatalities message. A graduate of the training noted that safety stakeholders have "embraced zero fatalities with a vengeance" and that "everyone is conveying a consistent message." Public awareness surveys show that 65 percent of Nevadans are familiar with the zero-fatalities message.

To expand the number of people, organizations, educational institutions, private companies, advocates, and others actively participating in the zero-fatalities effort, NDOT launched the "Certified Zero" program in 2015. The intent is to train and provide resources to new partners who carry the safe driving message into their workplaces, homes, and schools. Participants pledge to help reach zero fatalities today and share what they learned with others. For more information on Nevada's Zero Ambassador and Certified Zero training programs, email info@zerofatalitiesnv.com.

Meanwhile in New Jersey, a nearly decade-old program is training high school students to present injury prevention lessons that include traffic safety

to first- and second-graders in their community. Students involved in the Safety Ambassador Program developed by the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital receive safety training along with guidance on public speaking, poise, time management, and lesson plan development. They then work in pairs to create 25-minute lesson plans that use videos, PowerPoint presentations, interactive boards, and props (the hospital provides kits with the latter) to engage their younger counterparts.

While a long-term study is under way to determine the program's effectiveness in reducing unintentional childhood injuries, the program is making an impression on both age groups. Not only are approximately 200 new ambassadors trained each year, but thousands of children are reached who respond enthusiastically to learning from teens. Take the high school football player who asked for a volunteer to demonstrate safely walking across the street while holding someone's hand. The teacher didn't think the shy little girl selected would agree to assist him. But she walked up and took his hand. The teacher was shocked; the high school student wasn't, because he and his fellow ambassadors recognize they're held in high regard by the children. They're not just ambassadors, they're role models. For more information, visit the [Safety Ambassador Program website](#).



other than English). This is important, since the relationship your target audiences have with the messenger helps drive a sense of natural affinity with the desired outcomes. That makes the message harder to ignore or resist.

Also reach out to motor vehicle crash survivors or the family members of victims who are seeking a way to not only tell their story, but also turn their personal tragedy into meaningful action. The stories these individuals share can be life changing when linked to behavioral learning objectives. Keep in mind, however, that not all survivors or family members can or want to do this, so proceed cautiously and respectfully.



Once ambassadors are trained, provide them with a colorful and graphically appealing handout (with the TZD logo) that they can leave behind to reinforce the learning objectives. (Ask ambassadors if materials should be produced in multiple languages.) Since this takeaway can also be used to engage an individual or potential partner in a one-on-one conversation, try to include a website link—ideally for a standalone TZD website where the public will find more information about the learning objectives and the magnitude of the crash problem. Incorporating an interactive tool that shows the potential reduction in fatalities resulting from adopting a specific behavior—buckling up every trip, driving the speed limit, being visible when walking at night—is a powerful way to illustrate that a zero goal is possible.

TZD ambassadors need regular care and feeding. This includes ongoing outreach (e.g., monthly e-blasts with presentation tips, new data), annual training, updated handouts and other educational materials, and the latest crash, injury, and fatality data. In addition, providing ambassadors with a mechanism to easily report their TZD activities, such as a fillable form that resides on a web-based TZD clearinghouse, is critical for tracking and monitoring their reach and impact.



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